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FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4195

INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS

RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6279

RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 8981

RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 4854

RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0993

RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2386

RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 5567

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC

RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BANGKOK 002618

SIPDIS

NSC FOR PHU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/03/2018

TAGS: PGOV PHUM PINR PREL PTER TH

SUBJECT: THAILAND: TRILATERAL STRATEGIC DIALOGUE CT

CONSULTAION WITH AUSTRALIA AND JAPAN

REF: SECSTATE 84610

BANGKOK 00002618 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION JAMES F. ENTWISTLE, REASON 1.4 (B) AND (D)

Summary and Comment

¶1. (SBU) On August 20 we met with representatives from the embassies of Australia and Japan to discuss counterterrorism efforts under the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD), and whether southern Thailand should be part of the discussion under the TSD. We agreed that the extensive bilateral cooperation efforts we each have with the RTG made the TSD difficult; it is important to continue with the TSD coordination in Thailand, but it should be used to augment existing initiatives and fill gaps in RTG CT capacity, and not be seen as a platform for new initiatives. We decided that the best way to proceed under the auspices of the TSD was to hold a yearly coordination meeting to discuss our bilateral training and capacity building efforts with the RTG in respect to counterterrorism. Should these meetings reveal gaps that are not being addressed through any of our bilateral efforts, the relevant agencies/sections of our embassies would meet to discuss how best to fill the gap. The Australian embassy offered to host the next coordination meeting.

(C) Comment: We have robust cooperation and consultation with our Australian counterparts on many different levels. The same, however, cannot be said of our Japanese colleagues. Although Japan participates in the Foreign Anti-Narcotics and Crime Community, and through Cobra Gold participated in humanitarian and civil assistance projects with medical personnel, it is seldom forthcoming on bilateral training and cooperation efforts with the RTG. We have met with our Japanese counterparts to discuss the TSD, developments in southern Thailand, and our Trafficking in Persons program; they are willing meeting participants but are reluctant to discuss their efforts or any new initiatives. We will continue to cajole our Japanese colleagues forward on sharing information on their bilateral CT capacity building efforts. Through regular informal participation in meetings with our

Australian colleagues, we hope for better engagement in the future. End Comment.

Approaching Trilateral Cooperation in Thailand

¶13. (SBU) On August 20 we met with representatives from the Australian and Japanese embassies to discuss our counterterrorism efforts within the context of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (TSD). The agenda for the meeting was to review the status of the TSD in Thailand, determine how we would like it to proceed, and decide the best venue to discuss in fine granularity our CT capacity building efforts. We also discussed the insurgency in southern Thailand, and whether it should be a topic for discussion under the TSD.

¶14. (SBU) During the meeting, there was consensus that TSD program cooperation is difficult in Thailand because the US, Australia, and Japan each have extensive bilateral training and cooperation efforts with Thailand on a range of CT issues. We decided that the most effective thing we can do under the auspices of the TSD is to have a yearly coordination meeting where substantive experts from the relevant embassy sections describe the bilateral training programs and initiatives each country was sponsoring so as to identify gaps in training and short falls in RTG CT capacity. Should a meeting of this nature uncover gaps in our CT assistance that trilateral cooperation could address, smaller working groups from the relevant sections could decide on the next steps.

¶15. (SBU) Areas where there may be room for greater cooperation include:

BANGKOK 00002618 002.2 OF 002

Police and prosecutorial reform
Humanitarian and Human Rights training for Royal Thai Police
More coordination and consultation regarding counter radicalization initiatives
Transportation Security
Border Security
CBRN response training

Southern Thailand and the TSD

¶16. (SBU) We also had extensive discussions on the terrorism environment in Thailand and if/how the insurgency in southern Thailand fit into the TSD. Both Australia and Japan consider the South the same way we do - an internal insurgency and not a CT issue. There was broad agreement on the root causes and nature of the violence in the South, with concern all around that we may miss some important development that would signal a change in the nature of the violence, i.e. international interests and non-Thais becoming targets, or regional/international terrorist groups taking up residence in the South. Because of this concern, we agreed the South should not be left out of the TSD in Thailand even though it does not fit under our current definition of terrorism.

JOHN